

RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

-Ad Hoc Parking Advisory Committee



-Submitted by Councilwoman Lee Revis-Plank

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PARKING IN MILTON'S TOWN CENTER

No great city has ever been known for its abundant supply of parking.

-- **Allan Jacobs**

Parking always seems to be a challenge. There is never enough. It is not conveniently located.

Small towns like Milton don't own enough real estate to provide all the parking that is needed to accommodate Town Center-located businesses, activities, and events.

Delivery and construction trucks obstruct the few available spots. Local residents park close to home, even when those spots are prime for local businesses.

What can we do to address the parking conundrum? That's what the Ad Hoc Parking Committee was charged with investigating.

Town of Milton Resolution 2022-006

At the June 6, 2022 meeting of Milton Town Council, Resolution 2022-006 addressed Town Center parking by appointing an Ad Hoc Parking Committee, led by Councilwoman Lee Revis-Plank to investigate the situation in a formal process and present a report with recommendations to the Mayor and Town Council for review. It is anticipated that some or all of the recommendations will be sent to the standing Streets and Sidewalks Committee for review, prioritization, and possible implementation.

“Now, therefore, be it Resolved by the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Milton that:

- 1. An Ad Hoc Parking Committee be established with Councilwoman Lee Revis-Plank as the Chair.*
- 2. The Ad Hoc Parking Committee is charged with investigating the parking situation in Town Center and developing recommendations for addressing it to Town Council.*
- 3. The designated Chairperson shall facilitate said meetings, which shall comply with the Freedom of Information Act, including notice and minutes requirements, and the Chairperson may request assistance from Town staff, via the Town Manager, to assist therein.*
- 4. The Committee shall report their findings and recommendations regarding these parking-related concerns back to Mayor and Town Council during the scheduled regular Town Council Meeting on December 5, 2022.*
- 5. The said Committee shall sunset on December 31, 2022.*
- 6. The following members are appointed to serve at the pleasure of the Mayor and Town Council (listed on the next page of this report).”*

Ad Hoc Parking Committee Members

Lisa Falzarano – Resident and Business Owner – Milton Mercantile

Val Randolph – Resident

Justin Sinnott – Resident and Business Owner – Ogre’s Grove

Nitan Soni – Resident and Chamber of Commerce member

Lee Revis-Plank – Resident, Councilwoman, Committee Chair

Each committee member has a stake in the success of this committee’s work, as a town resident and/or as a local business owner. Each committee member took part in conducting surveys, summarizing responses, generating ideas, and enhancing the content of the Recommendations Report to the Mayor and Town Council.

Background

The pattern of Milton's historic houses running up along Union, Federal and Chestnut Streets was well established by the mid-19th century.

In 1865, Milton was incorporated with a town form of government. By the late 19th century, the industrial development of granaries and crop processing was well-established in the south end of Town.

By the early 20th century, Milton's town center was well-developed with general merchandising stores, shops, and restaurants and a movie theater. In 1909 a fire destroyed 14 buildings in the down town area, with \$400,000 worth of damage. Replacement and subsequent construction were of brick rather than the traditional wooden structures.

Milton's economic history has meant a balance of industrial and commercial uses, a diversity of population and income levels and a broad array of housing types. The healthy balance and growth is continuing today. One area of significant change, however, is in the location of different types of commercial uses. For the first two hundred years of life in Milton, the town center was the location of virtually all of the community's commercial activity. Today's Milton retains its general focus on the historic center. Federal and Union Streets, as in the past, form a main north-south spine of movement, land use and civic life. But a more specialized pattern of commercial land use has taken hold. Larger scale retail and business functions are choosing highway locations with high volumes of passing traffic and large amounts of free parking, conditions which are difficult to replicate in a downtown area.

The historic Town Center remains the civic center, and has welcomed new office and commercial uses suited to its central location, pedestrian scale and historic ambiance. These include antique, gift and specialty stores oriented to bay-shore visitors and professional service uses. Just as Milton's commercial land use patterns were once shaped by shipping on the Broadkill, and later by railroading on the Queen Anne's Railway, today they are being influenced by the area's arterial

roadways, and by new division of labor between the historic Town Center and more highway-oriented uses along Route 16.

In order for those businesses that remain within the Town Center to continue to thrive, it is necessary for the Town to do "due diligence" to ensure that everything parking-related action possible is identified and implemented in an efficient and cost-effective manner to ensure that there is adequate, convenient, reasonably-priced parking is available to serve the residents, visitors, and local business owners.

At the same time, it is imperative that the parking opportunities provided by the Town do not impede service providers in any way. They need to be able to operate their vehicles in the safest possible environment as well as park safely and efficiently in order to continue providing the Town with optimum level of services.

Given that there is limited property available for parking, that the Town has a finite financial standing, and that construction on the municipal parking lot has stressed available parking to the breaking point, the Ad Hoc Parking Committee is charged with investigating the situation and generating ideas for addressing it.

Ad Hoc Parking Committee Proceedings

For full details of the proceedings, please review the meeting notes for the Ad Hoc Parking Committee meetings held in the Green Room of the Milton Public Library on August 22, October 25, and November 14.

- The first meeting was canceled due to the chair contracting COVID
- August 22nd Kickoff Meeting, Review Project Plan and Surveys, Assignments
- October 25th Review Survey results, Determine data sorts
- November 14th Review draft and final approval of Recommendations Report with edits to Mayor and Town Council for the December 5, 2022 meeting
- December 31st sunset the Ad Hoc Parking Committee

Surveys/Questionnaires

Property Owners/Residents

- 1. What issues are you experiencing regarding parking?*
- 2. What actions, if any, are you taking to address parking issues?*
- 3. What suggestions do you have for the Milton Ad Hoc Parking Committee as we investigate in our downtown business area and develop a plan to address our parking issues?*

Business Owners

- 1. What issues are you experiencing regarding parking?*
- 2. What actions, if any, are you taking to address parking issues?*
- 3. What suggestions do you have for the Milton Ad Hoc Parking Committee as we investigate in our downtown business area and develop a plan to address our parking issues?*

Service Providers

- 1. What is the most troublesome/frustrating part of parking in Town Center?*
- 2. What suggestions do you have for addressing the parking issues?*
- 3. What obstacles do you see to improving parking in Town Center?*
- 4. What safety issues need to be taken into consideration when addressing parking issues?*
- 5. What quick hits do you suggest in addressing parking issues in Town Center?*
- 6. Do you think installing paid parking via meters would improve the parking situation? Why?*

7. *What suggestions do you have for the Milton Ad Hoc Parking Committee as we investigate in our downtown business area and develop a plan to address our parking issues?*

City/Town Managers in other Sussex County Resort Communities

1. *What issues have you identified with parking in your town/city?*
2. *What "quick hit" actions are being taken in your town/city to address parking issues?*
3. *What longer term plans have you put into place to address parking issues?*
4. *How do you fund parking improvement initiatives?*
5. *How do you communicate and garner support for parking improvement initiatives?*
6. *What planning consultant, if any, have you used to plan your parking strategy?*
7. *What assistance, if any, have you received from the state or county in developing your parking strategy?*
8. *What advice/tips would you give Milton as we investigate parking in our downtown area and develop a plan to address our parking issues?*

Key Contacts in Sussex County Resort Communities

- Town of **Georgetown** - Gene Dvornick
Email: gdvornick@georgetowndel.com, Phone: 302-856-7391
- City of **Lewes** - Ann Marie Townsend
Email: atownsend@ci.lewes.de.us; Phone: 302-645-7777
- City of **Rehoboth Beach** - City Manager position is vacant.
The Assistant City Manager is Evan Miller
Email: emiller@cityofrehoboth.com; Phone: 302-227-6181
- Town of **Dewey Beach** - Bill Zopler
Email: townmanager@townofdeweybeach.com; Phone: 302-227-6363
- Town of **Bethany Beach** - Cliff Graviet
Email: admin@townofbethanybeach.com; Phone: 302-539-8011
- City of **Seaford** - Charles Anderson
Email: canderson@seafordde.com; Phone: 302-629-9173
- Town of **Millsboro** - Acting Town Manager, Jamie Burk
Email: jamieb@millsboro.org; Phone: 302-934- 817

Survey Results

Idea/Description	Frequency
Keep parking free to attract people for businesses/no parking meters/no parking garage - no change from the current situation	10
Purchase property and Build a 2-3 level parking garage with an historic architectural look Use the Public Works property or Artesian Waste water property when available.	9
Develop a shuttle service to Town Center from a remote parking location such as Dogfish Head Brewery or the Food Lion parking lots or local fields	8
Add more handicapped parking spots	4
Use lots in Town owned by entities other than the Town, for example, HOB and MES schools, Goshen & St. John the Baptist churches and M&T and Community banks during hours when they are not being used by the owner for their originally intended purpose. This may require some recompense to the owners, perhaps in the form of a property tax rebate	3
Develop a partnership with ParkMobile or other parking app on cell phones to act as a parking meter. Both Georgetown and Rehoboth use this app and consider it to be working well and generating substantial income for the Town. For all the streets within 100 yards of the Milton Theater.	2
Turn Magnolia Street into a one-way street and configure parking spots along the space freed up for the other lane.	1
Negotiate with Bodie's and/or the Historical Society to purchase a small portion of their parking lots to expand the municipal lot	1
Provide a map of available parking printed and on the town website ... use social media to promote parking areas	1

Expand bike trails	1
Parking around Water Tower	1
Add a parking attendant during high volume events to direct people to appropriate parking spots	1
Better enforcement of 2-hour parking limit	1
Fresh yellow paint on No Parking areas	1
White Paint correctly-sized parking spots on all the Town center streets such as Broad, Mill, and around Goshen Cemetery on all four sides	1
Delineate appropriate parking spots on the gravel area behind Ogre's Grove and the Library	1
Install a bench outside the Library for handicapped/elderly drop off while driver finds a parking spot	1
Develop a fee for businesses to pay annually so that their customers can use specific parking spaces along Union street	1
Develop an annual parking permit with an appropriate fee for town-center residents	1

Ad Hoc Parking Committee Recommended Ideas for addressing the parking situation in Town Center

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Short-term recommendations focus on actions that can be undertaken by existing Town personnel quickly and that would be included in current operating expenses.

1. Ensure that there are easily and clearly-seen signs in Town Center specifying the two-hour limit on Parking. Enforce the limit. Perhaps request Milton Police Department to enforce parking limits for an hour each day.
2. Refresh the yellow paint along curbs within the Town Center that indicates where parking is NOT permitted. Refresh white paint where parking is permitted. Perhaps consider REFLECTIVE yellow paint. Most of this paint has faded over the years.
3. Paint correctly-sized parking spots on all the Town Center streets such as Broad St., Mill St., Chandler St., Valley Rd., Behringer Ave, and around Goshen Cemetery on all four sides using REFLECTIVE white paint that is easily seen.
4. Delineate 8 appropriately-sized parking spots on the gravel area behind Ogre's Grove and the Milton Public Library using REFLECTIVE white paint.
5. Add bike racks in convenient locations around town to accommodate bicycles of various configurations.
6. Provide a map of available parking printed and on the Town website ... use social media and distribution within businesses to promote parking areas.
 - 13 spots along the Milton Theater side of Union St.
 - 11 along the Mercantile side of Union St.
 - 35 spots in the newly-designed Municipal parking lot.

- 2 spots in front of and 2 spots behind the Milton Public Library.
- 4 spots beside the Police Station and Federal St. shops.

There is additional parking available on Broad St., Mill St., Behringer Ave., Lake Dr., and farther south on Federal St.

7. Print "warning/reminder notices" on brightly-colored heavy-weight stationery and authorize Business Owners in Town Center to place them on windshields of cars violating the posted 2-hour parking limit as a reminder to be mindful of the time-limit on parking imposed by Town Code.
8. Formalize a lease with the Milton Fire Department to use one of their lots along Front St. for municipal parking for the long-term.
9. Install benches along Union St. next to the Milton Public Library for disabled/elderly people to sit and wait for their rides. Drivers can access more remote parking locations but still be confident that their charges are safe and comfortable during the wait.
10. Develop and sell Annual Parking Permits for a Fee for parking in Town Center...Designate "Parking by Permit Only" Areas. Enforce it.
11. Develop a fee for Business Owners for the support/maintenance of parking spaces for their customers' use.
12. Use lots in the Town Center area that are owned by entities other than the Town, for example, H. O. Brittingham and Milton Elementary Schools, Goshen & St. John the Baptist Churches, and M&T and Community Banks during hours when they are not being used by the owner for their originally intended purpose. This may require some recompense to the owners, perhaps in the form of a property tax rebate.

INTERMEDIATE-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Intermediate-term recommendations focus on actions that need time to investigate and develop a project plan, perhaps including requests for bids.



13. Install attractive signs or kiosks in and around Town Center highlighting nearby parking spaces as well as nearby locations of interest, for example, the Milton Historical Society or Ogre's Grove Comic Store.

14. Add more handicapped parking spots around Town Center.

15. Negotiate with property owners in and close to Town

Center to install a "pocket parking lot" on a portion of their property to be used for overflow parking in the event of a festival, parade, or other event that causes the municipal lot to be filled to capacity. For example, next to the lot where the boat ramp is placed next to Wagamon's Pond. There is already a parking lot, but there is a space between the lot and the sidewalk that could accommodate additional parking spaces if paved with permeable paving blocks (for example, True Grid Pavers). There is also space behind the Milton Theater.

NB: A pocket parking lot is a small outdoor space, usually no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre, often located in an urban area surrounded by commercial buildings or houses on small lots where people can park their vehicles for a short time when the lots in the municipal lot(s) are at capacity. Pocket parking lots are urban open spaces on a small-scale and provide a safe and inviting environment for surrounding community members. These lots can be located on spaces that would accommodate as few as 4 vehicles. Often, permeable paving grid blocks are installed to ensure that the space does not deteriorate into

muddy landscape and grass will continue to grow up and through the pavers.

16. Develop a parking lot at the base of the Milton water tower close to Milton Memorial Park. Pave the area with permeable tile pavers, such as True Grid Pavers. Ensure there is a parking attendant during festivals/events to monitor and direct traffic flow versus self-serve.
17. Turn Magnolia Street into a one-way street moving east toward the Milton Public Library end (Opposite of Broad St's direction) and configure "head-in" slanted parking spots along the space freed up for the other lane.
18. Develop a partnership with ParkMobile or other parking "app" on cell phones to install parking meters for all the streets in Town Center. (Both Georgetown and Rehoboth use this app and consider it to be working well and generating substantial income for the Town/City.)

Install two-hour parking along Union and Federal Streets from the intersection with Broad Street to the intersection with Mill Street. Enforce the time-limit with violations fines. Use the funds to fund building a parking facility.

ParkMobile Contact name is: Joseph Fazio, Sr. Account Manager, 813-599-2720, Joseph.Fazio@parkmobile.io

Some residents of apartments above businesses use public parking spots along Union and Federal Streets for long-term parking. Some vehicles for contractors working in Town Center use these same spaces, thus blocking spaces that would be used by casual shoppers. Signs reminding them that these spaces are reserved for shoppers would be appropriate when placed where they can be seen.

19. Purchase land, for example, a small parcel of land from the Milton Historical Society and develop a "head-in" slanted parking lot for cars, or along the east border of Bodie's and develop a few more additional parking spots in that space.

LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Long-term recommendations focus on actions that need considerable time and funding to plan and implement. The Ad Hoc Parking Committee recommends that these be considered for addition to the Town's updated Comprehensive Plan.

20. Investigate the viability of a shuttle to bring participants into downtown activities from remote parking lots. The service would run to Town Center from remote locations such as Dogfish Head Brewery and/or the Food Lion parking lots or local fields.

The Water's Edge Church on Route 16 has offered space/shuttle to south/west bound travelers.

21. Install a new Town "standing committee" named Milton Parking Authority. Charge it with developing fund-raising methods to accumulate needed financial resources to acquire land/build a parking building/facility. Enable that committee to generate ideas for sponsorships for the project.

For example, develop a tax on commercial properties and vendors in Town center where additional parking would enable increased volume of business.

22. Identify and apply for grants that would be used to fund a parking building/facility.
23. Request assistance from U.S. and State-level Senators and Representatives for funds to support the establishment of a parking building/facility authority and to investigate the possibility of purchasing enough property to build a parking facility/building.

Placement needs to be convenient to support Town Center businesses, for example, Mulberry St. or the parcel where the waste treatment plant will be demolished. Another possibility is the Public Works lot once they move to Sam Lucas Road building.

24. Purchase property and Build a 2-3 level parking garage with an historic architectural look, for example, buy run down houses and tear them down to make room for parking spaces.

25. Move the boat ramp reserved for trailer parking (behind the Milton Public Library) further down along the river, enabling the DNREC spaces to be redesigned and dedicated once again to Town parking.

26. Funding any parking-related project is a concern. One possible way to finance parking projects might be to partner with a non-profit (for example, the Milton Community Foundation) and/or environmental groups whose goal is to preserve aesthetics, prevent flooding disasters and/or enhance the riverside with a walking/bicycle trail concurrent with a parking facility of some sort.

The Ad Hoc Parking Committee feels that these recommendations are reasonable and can be implemented over time. The Committee wishes to thank all those who participated in the surveys, giving freely of their time and expertise as well as sharing their personal and professional experiences.